

July 12, 2019

Dr. Waqar Ahmad
Chancellor
Abu Dhabi University
PO Box 59911
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Dear Chancellor Ahmad:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Abu Dhabi University by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to Abu Dhabi University April 16-19, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Abu Dhabi University prior to the Special Visit and the institution's May 26, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague Mohammed Parakandi, Director, Accreditation. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on:
 - (1) Continued progress with diverse funding streams;
 - (2) More complete implementation of the strategic plan;
 - (3) Effectiveness of enrollment management and status of retention and completion rates;
 - (4) Success of new degree programs.
2. Continue with the scheduled Offsite Review in fall 2021 and Accreditation Visit spring 2022
3. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by May 1, 2020 to address:
 - (1) financial data for the 2019-20 academic year, together with a table that displays by category three years of revenue and spending across that time period;
 - (2) An estimate of revenue and expenses the university is planning in the 2020-2021 academic year;
 - (3) Enrollment and residence hall use for the three year period ending May 2020.

The Commission commends Abu Dhabi University in particular for the following:

1. The growth in student enrollment through thoughtful initiatives undertaken in the region's current challenging economic climate and competitive higher education

- environment. The degree programs implemented and planned for the Abu Dhabi and Al Ain campuses are sound. Beginning with its first stage completion in 2020, the investment in the impressive new Al Ain campus promises to attract additional enrollments. The opening of the new building in Dubai in 2017 marked the University's entry into the competitive Dubai student market, and the campus is off to a good start offering several graduate programs with plans to initiate undergraduate programs in the next academic year.
2. The strategic investments made by the Holding Company, led by its Board Chair, have provided the necessary support to the university to add programs and campuses, address marketing and enrollments, enable the development of new buildings, and achieve Abu Dhabi University's updated ambitious mission, vision, and plans.
 3. The commitment to financial and faculty support of student research activities, including the ADU Innovation Center. Students appear to be well-informed about research opportunities and motivated to participate both by curricular requirements and by the active encouragement of the faculty. The many on-campus and external opportunities include the annual Undergraduate Research Competition sponsored by the university, now having grown to include other regional institutions.
 4. Successful and mature strategic planning, institutional research, and assessment and analysis functions. These include the excellent and sophisticated planning documents that the team reviewed, including the Strategic Plan, Annual Program Enhancement Review plans, ADU Vision 2022, Marketing Department Strategic Initiatives, and Marketing Communications Strategy. The university-wide, data-based decision-making processes have contributed to helping the institution grow and develop effectively.
 5. The process of planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating new, innovative academic programs that match curricular offerings with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and attributes necessary to gain work in diverse fields and in the new knowledge economy, with specific relevance to the UAE and the region.
 6. The external validation of quality as evidenced by the fast track to WASC accreditation and achieving accreditation from professional accrediting bodies such as AACSB, ABET, and RIBA. The QS World Ranking 'Top 150 Under 50' and the identification by QS in 2018 as one of the 'Top 10 Fastest Risers' in the Arab Region are additional markers of excellence and recognition. A distinctive feature of the University was noted by the QS Ranking of ADU as 3rd in the world for faculty diversity and 10th for student diversity.
 7. The development of high-level participation of students in university governance, committees, and campus life. The investment in facilities and support services that enrich the student experience.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

1. Continue to make adjustments to revenue projections and expenditures based on the UAE economic situation, applying strategic budgeting practices across the university. (CFR 3.4)

2. Continue to develop and manage realistic targets for enrollment growth in light of the region's economic challenges, while maintaining quality and stability in the student population. (CFR 3.4)
3. Prioritize, when feasible, the completion of the commitment to the Strategic Plan's support of faculty research and development, including appropriate funding. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)
4. Continue to research ways to support students in their studies with initiatives that target, evaluate, and assess the current trajectory of increasing retention rates, expanding the focused analytical approaches developed in University College to full development in the other colleges. (CFR 2.13)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Abu Dhabi University's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on Abu Dhabi University's website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Abu Dhabi University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamiennie S. Studley
President

JSS/mbg

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Mohammed Parakandi, ALO
Ali Bin Harmal, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Mark Goor, Vice President